

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3645

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USIA WASHDC

SECDEF WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, SY, LE

SUBJECT: AL-ASSAD PRESS CONFERENCE WITH LEBANESE JOURNALISTS

1. SYRIAN MEDIA JUNE 25 HIGHLIGHTED STATEMENTS MADE BY PRES. AL-ASSAD IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS POSED BY LEBANESE PRESS DELEGATION WHICH ACCOMPANIED FONMIN BUTROS. AL-ASSAD DOWNPLAYED THREAT OF WAR IN SOUTH LEBANON. HE SAID, "SHO SPEAKS OF WAR STARTING IN SOUTH LEBANON? WE, THE ARABS, MUST BE PREPARED TO FACE ALL PROSPECTS, YET THIS TALK ABOUT WAR IS NOT NECESSARILY PRECISE. THE ARABS SHOULD DEFEND SOUTH LEBANESE AS THEY WOULD DEFEND ANY OTHER PIECE OF LAND."

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2. ASKED ABOUT SYRO-LEBANESE COORDINATION PERTAINING TO SECURITY, FOREIGN POLICY AND ECONOMY, SYRIAN PRES. MADE NO REFERENCE TO SYRO-LEBANESE FEDERATION BUT INSTEAD MADE BLAND ASSERTION THAT "AT THIS STAGE COORDINATION IS DEVOTED TO IMPROVING SITUATION INPPEBANON" FOLLOWING CIVIL WAR. HE NOTED HE AND PRES. SARKIS WERE IN CONTINUOUS CONTACT,

BUT DENIED THAT MEETING BETWEEN TWO PRESIDENTS
CURRENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION. HE PROFESSED OPTIMISM
REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION OF CAIRO AND RIYADH SUMMIT
RESOLUTIONS, CLAIMING THAT PART OF THE RESES. HAVE
ALREADY BEEN IMPLEMENTED, ANOTHER PART BEING IMPLEMENTED,
AND DIALOGUE TAKING PLACE AMONG CONCERNED PARTIES TO
IMPLEMENT THE REMAINDER.

3. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION ABOUT NECESSITY OF CONVENING
ARAB SUMMIT, AL-ASSAD ADHERED TO GENERAL FORMULATION
PRAISING USEFULNESS OF ARAB MEETING AT SUMMIT OR OTHER
LEVEL, AND EXPRESSING SYRIAN SUPPORT FOR "ANY MEETING."

4. COMMENT: AL-ASSAD'S REMARKS SEEMED DESIGNED TO
REASSURE LEBANESE THAT SYRIA NOT PRESSING FOR MORE
FORMAL AGREEMENT ON BILATERAL SYRO-LEBANESE TIES.
HIS COMMENTS ABOUT SOUTH LEBANON APPEARED
INTENDED TO DEFUSE SOME OF THE TALK ABOUT DANGERS OF
WAR BEING INITIATED THERE.
PELLETREAU

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Message Attributes

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